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1968/11/14

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Department of State

TELEGRAM

ACTION COPY

~~SECRET~~

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4432
INFO RUFNCR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2892
STATE GRNC
BT

3872Q
1968 NOV 14 AM 8 05

~~SECRET~~ SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 42653

DECLASSIFIED
E.O. 12356, Sec. 3.4
NLJ 89-72
By LR, NARA, Date 7-31-91

NODIS/HARVAN/DOUBLE PLUS

PARIS FOR HARRIMAN AND VANCE

1. AMBASSADOR BUI DIEM CAME TO SEE ME THIS AFTERNOON NOV 14. HE STAYED FOR OVER AN HOUR. MY GENERAL IMPRESSION FROM THE ACCOUN OF HIS CONVERSATIONS HERE IS THAT THE LOGJAM IS BREAKING AND WE AR BEGINNING TO SEE SOME MOVEMENT IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.

2. BUI DIEM SAID HE HAD COME BACK BECAUSE HE THOUGHT IT HIGHLY IM PORTAMT FOR THE PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT TO KNOW WHAT THE ATMO PHERE WAS IN THE US AND, MORE SPECIFICALLY, BECAUSE HE WANTED TO CONVEY PERSONALLY TO THE PRESIDENT THE MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT-ELECT THAH HE HAD RECEIVED THROUGH SENATOR DIRKSEN.

3. HE FELT HIS DECISION TO COME HAD BEEN SHOWN TO BE CORRECT BECA HE HAD FOUND THERE WAS NO TRUE APPRECIATION HERE OF THE ATMOSPHERE THE US, OF THE IZATIENCE OF OUR PEOPLE TO GET ON WITH THE TALKS, A HE HAD TRIED TO CONVEY TO ALL THOYE HE HAD SEEN HERE THE SENSE OF URGENCY IN COMING TO AN AGREEMENT WITH THE US BECAUSE THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY OUR FOR THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE.

4. HE HAD HAD A VERY LONG TALK WITH PRESIDENT THIEU YESTERDAY, EIEM SAID, FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER LONG TALK WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT. HE HAD EXPLAINED TO THIEU VERY FULLY AND FRANKLY THE SITUATION IN WASHINGTON AND REMARKED THAT ALTHOUGH HE HAD NOT PERSONALLY SEEN PRESIDENT JOHNSON, BY FELT THAT OUR PRESIDENT TOOK A VERY SERIOUS VIEW OF DEVELOPMENTS HERE. HE HAD GIVEN THIEU A FULL ACCOUNT OF HIS TALKS WITH SENATOR DIRKSEN AND WITH BUNDY.

5. HE HAD ALSO TOLD THIEU, DIEM CONTINUED, THAT HE THOUGHT HE HAD RECEIVED BAD ACVICE IN SENDING A PERSONAL MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT ELECT SUGGESTING THAT HE COME HERE, BECAUSE THIS HAD BEEN SUBJECT TO MISINTZRPRETATION AND IT MAKE A BAD IMPRESSION IN WASHINGTON. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE PRESIDENT-ELECT STANDS FOUR-SQUARE WITH PRESIDENT JOHNSON WITH RESPECT TO VIET-NAM AND THAT THE GVN IS IN FACT CONFRONTED WITH A SOLID US BI-PARTISAN FRONT. HE SAID HE ALSO SUGGESTED TO THIEU THAT HE SEND A PERSONAL MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT JOHNSON.

6. HE HAD STRESSED, DIEM WENT ON, IN HIS TALKS WITH THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE PRESIDENT, THAT NO TIME MUST BE LOST IN WORKING OUT A FORMULA THAT WOULD ALLOW THE GVN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PARIS TALKS

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HE COMMENTED TO ME HOWEVER: YOU KNOW HOW THE PRESIDENT IS. IT WILL TAKE A LITTLE TIME FOR HIM TO ADJUST TO THIS. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE IS VERY QUICK TO GRASP THE SITUATION AND WILL MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION EVENTUALLY. THE TROUBLE IS THAT THIEU THINKS TOO MUCH IN TERMS OF VIETNAMESE SOCIETY AND NOT ENOUGH IN TERMS OF VIET-NAM'S POSITION INTERNATIONALLY. IT WILL TAKE A LITTLE TIME FOR HIM TO VIEW THE SITUATION IN THE PROPER PERSPECITVE."

7. DIEM SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD ASKED HIM TO TALK WITH MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL CECURITY COUNCIL THIS MORNING; HE HAD BEEN RELUCTANT AT FIRST BUT WHEN THE VICE PRESIDENT ALSO URGED HIM HE DECIDED TO DO IT. HE FELT THIS HAD BEEN VERY USEFUL. HE ALSO TALKED WITH SOME MEMBERS OF THE SENATE AND FOUND THEM RECEPTIVE TO THE NEED TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE PRESENT IMPASSE.

8. THIEU HAD VEEN VERY UPSET BY THE CLIFFORD STATEMENT, DIEM SAID, BUT THE HAD ALSO TOLD THIEU THAT THE "REPLY" BY MINISTER OF INFORMATION THIEN HAD BEEN VERY UNWISE, TO WHICH THE PRESIDENT AGREED. THIEN'S STATEMENT HAD BEEN MADE WITHOUT ANY CONSULTATION. DIEMEGED THAT THERE BE NO FURTHER PUBLIC RECRIMINATIONS, AND I SAID I COULDN'T AGREE MORE.

9. BUI DIEM SAID HE WOULD STAY HERE UNTIL A SOLUTION WAS WORKED OUT.PHIS MIGHT FCE A FEW MORE DAYS TO PREPARE PEOPLE PSYCHOLOGICALL AND PERHAPS THE CLIFFORD STATEMENT MEANT THAT A LITTLE MORE TIME WOULD BE REKSIRED SO THAT PEOPLE WILL NOT THINK THAT THE GVN IS CAVI IN UNDER THREATS. HE THOUGHT THERE HAD BEEN MISUNDERSTANDINGS ON BOTH SIDES BUT THAT THESE COULD BE REPAIRED AND THAT HE THOUGHT THERE WAS GOOD WILL ON THE GVN SIDE.

10. WITH RESPECT TO THE STATEMENT THAT WE HAD PROPOSED ON NOV 11, DIEM SAID HE THOUGHT IT SATISFOCTORY IN GENERAL BUT PROBABLY THE GVN WOULD HAVE SOME SUGGESTIONS WHICH WOULD NOT SO MUCH CONCERN SUBSTANCE AS PHRASEOLOGY, AND HE SAID (AS FOREIGN MINISTER THANH HAD INFORMED US) THAT THE STUDY OF OUR DRAFT HAD NOT YET BEEN COMPLETED.GDKY WAS PLANNLCG TO SEE THIEU TOMORROW MORNING AND WOULD URGE HIM TO SEE ME AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IN ANY CASE, DIEM SAID, THE PRESIDENT WOULD SENT FOR ME SOON. ALSO, THE VICE PRESIDENT HAD SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO TALK WITH ME.

11. I ASKED DIEM'S OPINION WHEHTER HE THOUGHT I SHOULD WAIT FOR THIEU TO MAKE THE NEXT MOVE AND WHETHER HE THOUGHT IT WAS UP TO ME TO RESPOND TO WHAT HE HAD TOLD ME ABOUT THE VICE PRESIDENT. DIEM THOUGHT I SHOULD WAIT UNTIL I HEARD FROM THIEU BUT HE THOQCHT THIS WOULD BE SOON, AND THAT I MIGHT INQUIRE FROM KY'S OFFICE WHEN HE WISHED TO SEE ME. DIEM ASKED WHETHER I WOULD ACCEPT A DINNER INVITATION FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT, AND I SAID OF COURSE I WOULD DO SO.

12. WE HAD EARLIER INFORMATION FROM DAND DUC KHOI WHICH WAS GENERALLY CONFIRMED BY WHAT BUS DIEM SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD ME. MINISTER OF INTERIOR KHIEM WAS ALSO REPORTED AS SAYING THAT MATTERS SEEMED TO BE CLEARING UP AND THAT HE THOUGHT OBSTACLES HAD BEEN REMOVED TO AN UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE USG AND THE GVN ON THE PARIS TALKS.

BUNKER

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VV CRA857
OO RUEHC RUFNCR
DE RUMJIR 42653 3191230
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O R 141200Z NOV 68 ZFF-1
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4433
INFO RUFNCR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 2893
STATE GRNC
BT
~~S E C R E T~~ FINAL SECTION OF 2 SAIGON 42653

1968 NOV 14 AM 8 03

NODIS/HARVAN/DOUBLE PLUS

PARIS FOR HARRIMAN AND VANCE

13. COMMENT: I BELIEVE THAT THIS TALK WITH BUI DIEM AND THE EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER THANH (REPORTED SEPTEL) SHOW THAT IT IS THE DESIRE OF GVN LEADERS TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE IMPASSE AND TO SEND A DELEGATION TO PARIS. IN ORDER FOR THIS EFFORT TO SUCCEED, HOWEVER, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE BE ABLE TO WORK OUT THE METHOD FOR ACHIEVING THIS QUIETLY WITH THEM AND THAT WE ALLOW THEM A REASONALBE PERIOD OF TIME TO COME AROUND.

14. IS IS EVIDENT THAT SECRETARY CLIFFORD'S PRESS CONFERENCE AND THE ANGRY REPLY BY THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR THE GVN TO MOVE IMMEDIATELY SINCE IT WOULD APPEAR TO BE DONE UNDER US PRESSURE. IT IS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL THAT THERE BE NO MORE PUBLIC STATEMENTS WHICH WOULD MAKE THE SITUATION MORE DIFFICULT, SO THAT THE EXCELLENT DEPARTMENT STATEMENT AND BUI DIEM'S ACTIVITIES HERE CAN HAVE THEIR MAXIMUM EFFECT.

15. I ANTICIPATE THAT THROUGH CONVERSATIONS WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER, PRESIDENT, AND VICE PRESIDENT IN THE NEXT TWO OR THREE DAYS, WE CAN WORK OUT THE EXACT FORM OF THE STATEMENTS WHICH WILL BE USED AS A BASIS FOR RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM. I HAVE ASSUMED THAT THE DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT WAS IN FACT THE ANSWER TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S NOVEMBER 13 MEMORANDUM AND THIEU'S NOVEMBER 8 PROPOSAL, AND IT IS NOW UNLIKELY THAT A FULL WRITTEN REPLY WILL BE NEEDED.

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16. IF THE DEPARTMENT HAS ANY FURTHER COMMENTS ON SAIGON 42582, HOWEVER, I WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING THEM PROMPTLY, BUT I WOULD URGE THAT I BE GIVEN FLEXIBILITY AS TO THE USE THAT MIGHT BE MADE OF THEM. AT THIS MOMENT IT SEEMS MOST LIKELY THAT THE COMBINATION OF THE DEPARTMENT'S NOVEMBER 13 STATEMENT AND THE DRAFT STATEMENTS FURNISHED TO THE GVN NOVEMBER 11, PERHAPS MODIFIED SLIGHTLY TO MEET GVN POINTS, SHOULD BE THE BASIS FOR AN AGREED SOLUTION.

17. I HAVE JUST NOW BEEN INFORMED THAT THE PRESIDENT WISHES TO SEE ME TOMORROW MORNING.
BUNKER

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